

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-3 (cancelled)

4. (New) A magnetic encoder to be used in a wheel bearing, for forming a pulse train by virtue of a magnetic force and generating a code, comprising:

a magnetic ring circumferentially magnetized with alternate S poles and N poles;

a reinforcing ring fixed to said magnetic ring; and

a non-magnetic protective cover covering said magnetic ring and welded to said reinforcing ring.

5. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 4, wherein

said non-magnetic protective cover is welded to said reinforcing ring via one of

(i) welds positioned along an inner circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover,

(ii) welds positioned along an outer circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover, and

(iii) welds positioned along an inner circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover, and welds positioned along an outer circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover.

6. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 5, wherein

said welds comprise micro-spot welds produced by a laser.

7. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 6, wherein

said micro-spot welds produced by a laser comprise micro-spot welds produced by a YAG laser.

8. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 5, wherein

said welds comprise welds produced by a YAG laser.

9. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 4, wherein said non-magnetic protective cover is welded to said reinforcing ring via micro-spot welds produced by a laser.

10. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 9, wherein said micro-spot welds produced by a laser comprise micro-spot welds produced by a YAG laser.

11. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 4, wherein said non-magnetic protective cover is welded to said reinforcing ring by using YAG laser.

12. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 4, wherein said non-magnetic protective cover is welded to said reinforcing ring via one of

- (i) a weld extending along an entire inner circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover,
- (ii) a weld extending along an entire outer circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover, and
- (iii) a weld extending along an entire inner circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover, and a weld extending along an entire outer circumference of said non-magnetic protective cover.

13. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 12, wherein each said weld comprises a weld produced by a laser.

14. (New) The magnetic encoder according to claim 13, wherein said weld produced by a laser comprises a weld produced by a YAG laser.